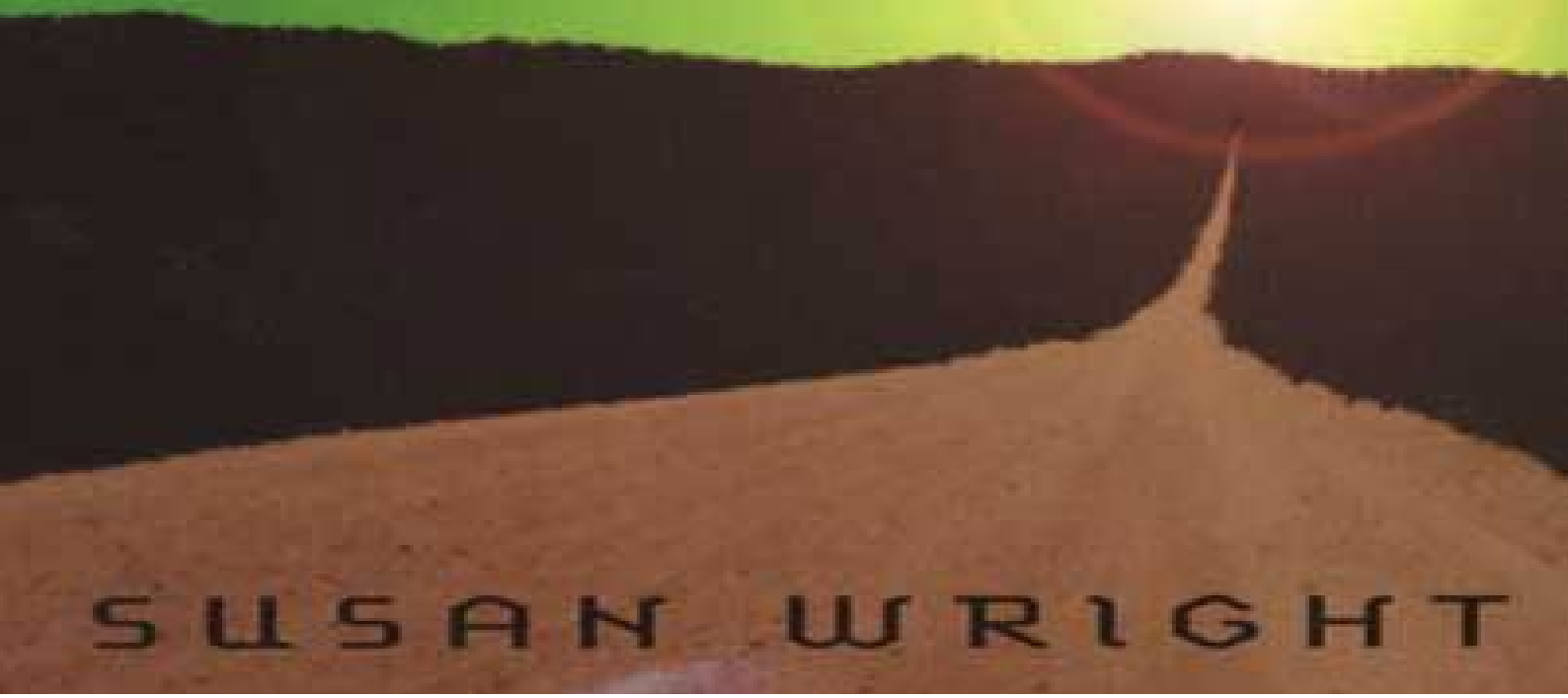
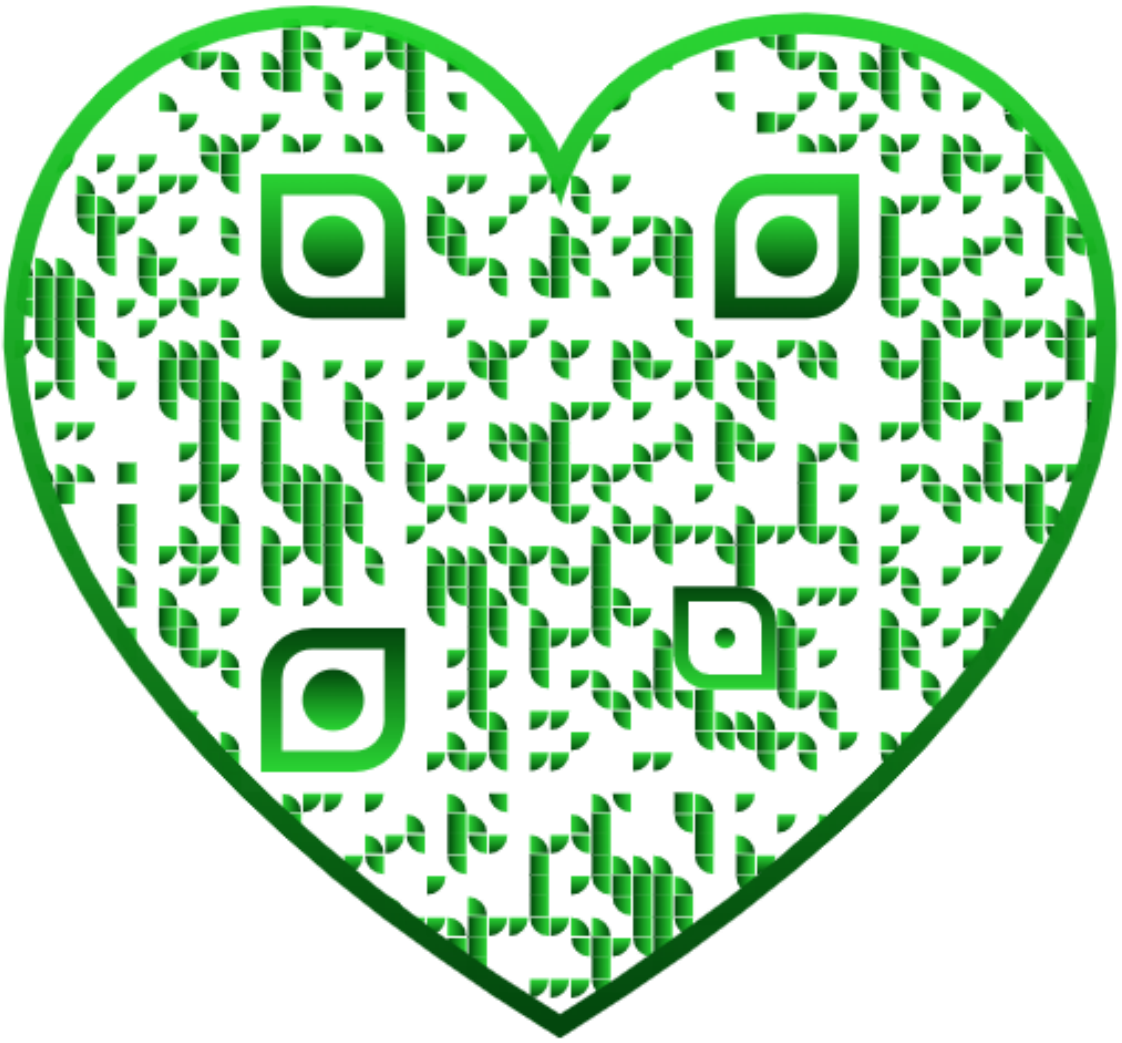
Investigations on Current Extraterrestrial Activity in Area 51

# UFO HEADQUARTERS

ABDUCTIONS. MUTILATIONS. SECRECY.
DANGEROUS EXPERIMENTS GONE TERRIBLY WRONG...
WHAT IS HAPPENING IN AREA 51?



SUSAN WRIGHT



# UFO

# HEADQUARTERS

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*Investigations on Current Extraterrestrial Activity*

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**Susan Wright**

## CONTENTS


1. At the Border of Area 51
    - Area 51 on the Internet
    - What's in a Name?
    - "Cammo Dudes" in Action
    - FEMA
    - Executive Orders
    - FEMA and UFOs
    - Secrecy at Area 51

2. The History of UFO Sightings
    - Ancient UFOs
    - Premodern UFOs
    - Modern UFOs
    - The UFO Wave of 1947

3. Government Investigations of UFOs
    - The Washington Wave of 1952
    - The Robertson Panel
    - The Brookings Institute Report
    - The Condon Report
    - The O'Brien Committee
    - NASA

4. Government Secrecy and Black Projects
    - Freedom of Information Act
    - Black Projects
    - Manipulating the Media
    - Area 51 Land Grab

The Cost of Secrecy

5. Disinformation
The Area 51 Security Manual
“Misinformed or Intentionally Misleading”
Majestic-12
Conspiracy Theories
Cults as a Consequence

6. Roswell
Witnesses
Government Explanations
Debating Roswell
Government Insider Claims
Roswell Autopsy Film
Area 51 Alien Interview Film
Capitalizing on Roswell

7. Sightings at Area 51
Nellis UFO on Film
Research and Development Aircraft
Aurora
What’s in a Name?
Observation

8. Sightings by Pilots and Astronauts
NASA Video and Audio Recordings
Astronauts
Gordon Cooper
Intellectual Property

9. Engineering UFOs at Area 51
Bob Lazar
Papoose Lake
John Lear
Jarod-2

10. Scientific Analysis
Technological Leaps
SETI
Extraterrestrial Life
Metaphysical Research
National Institute of Discovery Science

11. Alien Abductions
Hypnosis
Physiological Research
Geophysical Phenomena
Abductions by the Government
Physical Evidence

12. UFOs in Popular Culture
UFOs in the Media
ET Highway
UFOs on the Internet
UFO Organizations

Selected Bibliography
UFO Organizations and Resources

CHAPTER 1

# At the Border of Area 51

As we pulled up to the border of Area 51, marked with large white signs, a brand-new Jeep Cherokee slowed to a stop on the other side, neatly blocking the dirt road. The windows of the Jeep were nearly black, so with the sun setting in the hills behind them, I could barely see silhouettes of the two men inside.

USE OF DEADLY FORCE AUTHORIZED, one of the two border signs stated in bold red letters. Both cited Federal Regulation #795 as forbidding entrance to the government installation.

Though the signs didn't say it, we were at the eastern border of Area 51, the secret government facility approximately ninety miles due north of Las Vegas, Nevada. From almost any vantage point, the six-by-ten-mile block of land that encompasses Area 51 is hidden behind low mountains.

But the mountains can't hide the aircraft that take off and land on the runways across Groom dry lake bed—said to be the longest in the world at nearly thirty thousand feet. The new stealthy aircraft, such as the mythical hypersonic Aurora, are rumored to be capable of reaching speeds of Mach 8, which means it would take a racetrack half the size of America for it to turn in a circle at top speed.

People are drawn to Area 51 not only to see supersophisticated aircraft, but because of the numerous sightings of flying saucers and UFOs. There is actually video footage of a UFO over Nellis Range that is remarkably like a video of a Brazilian UFO. And there have been strange cattle mutilations as well as reports of abductions by aliens

while visitors were in the area.

In a 1989 interview with George Knapp on KLAS-TV, a former government employee named Bob Lazar said that he worked at S-4, just south of Area 51, in a project to back-engineer alien flying saucers. Lazar says our government has obtained nine discs and is trying to decipher the alien technology. He went public, he claims, in order to protect his own life after breaking his security oath.

No one knows for sure which government agency controls Area 51, so I tried to get in by contacting Nellis Air Force Base, which operates the Nellis Range Complex, a bombing and gunnery range that surrounds the Groom Lake area. During one of my phone conversations I was told, "It's dangerous out there—there's bombs dropping all over the place." One of the uses of the Nellis Range is "Red Flag," established in 1975 as a realistic combat training exercise involving the Air Force and its allies. These forces "attack" Nellis Range targets—mock airfields, vehicle convoys, missile sites, tanks, parked aircraft, and bunkered and defensive positions. The Gulf War owed a measure of its success to Red Flag exercises.

The Air Force denied me access to Nellis Range, and Technical Sergeant James Brook sent me a fax of the official Groom Lake Statement (dated 26 October 1994):

> There are a variety of activities, some of which are classified, throughout what is often called the Air Force's Nellis Range Complex. The range is used for the testing of technologies and systems and training for operations critical to the effectiveness of U.S. military forces and the security of the United States. There is an operating location near Groom dry lake. Some specific activities and operations conducted on the Nellis Range, both past and present, remain classified and cannot be discussed.

Brook explained that he couldn't talk about anything regarding the Nellis Range, even about his personal feelings, because of security reasons. And he never let the words "Area 51" cross his lips—the

secret base is officially known as “the Groom Lake facility.” Brook then referred me to a next higher level: to Air Combat Command and the Secretary of the Air Force, Department of Defense.

I sent letters to the Pentagon requesting a tour of the Nellis Range, including but not limited to Papoose Lake and Area 51, but I wasn’t surprised when one after another request simply disappeared into the black hole of “black project” secrecy. That’s when I asked my congress-woman for help, and the Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney, member of the House of Representatives for the 14th District, New York, wrote several letters to Lieutenant Napoleon Byars, National Affairs Division, urging that my “request for a media tour receive prompt review and every possible consideration.”

While the Pentagon never did answer me, Congresswoman Maloney kindly sent me a copy of her reply from Lieutenant Colonel Patricia M. Fornes, Congressional Inquiry Division. Fornes refused to grant my request on grounds of “policies and regulations relative to national security.”

For further inquiries, a phone number was offered. So I called Major Guy Thompson, Public Affairs, and asked, Now that you’ve acknowledged the existence of the Groom Lake facilities, what would be the harm in allowing in a few select media? You’ve done it before at supersensitive government facilities, why not here?

Major Thompson was extremely pleasant and interested in my project, but he only replied, “We’ve had quite a few journalists ask for a tour, but we can’t because of issues of national security.”

The Department of Energy (DoE) was infinitely more accommodating, as per the dictates of former Energy Secretary Hazel O’Leary, who took President Clinton’s request for openness literally. The DoE gave me an extensive tour of the Nevada Test Site (NTS), a 1,350-square-mile restricted area just west of the Nellis Range. On BLM maps, Area 51 is a small box of land barely connected to the northeastern part of NTS—and technically considered to be under the same land management.

NTS, otherwise known as “America’s Nuclear Proving Ground,” is a

vast complex of underground test tunnels, assembly plants, bomb craters, and nuclear waste storage facilities. On my tour, I viewed the shafts where a warhead and a small amount of plutonium were going to be detonated 980 feet underground in June 1997. While eating lunch on Rainier Mesa, I had a fantastic view of the runways and the northernmost half of Groom Lake.

A few days later, at the eastern border of Area 51, I couldn't see the base, although I was physically much closer than I had been at NTS. With the narrow road blocked by the security Jeep, we were boxed into a narrow ravine where two mountain buttes overlapped. The two men didn't budge.

There were two cameras on the butte to the left, tracking our Dodge Diesel (equipped with two scanners and a CB radio). The sophisticated camera setups had video uplinks, parabolic dish reflectors, and yagi antennae. Near the white warning signs, another surveillance camera was tied to a yucca tree, an unsettling cyborg of ancient flora and silicon chips.

Ironically, this electronic Berlin wall was erected across what used to be known as Freedom Ridge, appropriated by the Air Force in a much-publicized "land grab." In April 1995, the border of Area 51 was pushed outward, eliminating the last two easily accessible vantage points to view the Groom Lake facility.

The name "Area 51" wasn't even acknowledged by the government until legal suits were filed against the Department of Defense, the Secretary of Defense, and the Environmental Protection Agency. These suits were filed by a group of Area 51 employees and their families because of alleged exposure to toxic wastes burned in open pits at the Groom Lake facility. This lawsuit finally forced the Department of Defense to release their 1994 "Groom Lake Statement," which tersely admits, "There is an operating location near Groom dry lake."

The waste lawsuit, meanwhile, trundled on in the court of appeals in San Francisco, after being dismissed by a federal district court judge in Las Vegas. On January 8, 1998, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of

Appeals held that state secrets privilege invoked by the Secretary of the Air Force makes discovery and trial on the claims of enviromental crimes “impossible.”

## Area 51 on the Internet

The government apparently intends to keep everything about Area 51 a secret. Jonathan Turley, attorney for the workers in the hazardous waste lawsuits, realized how serious the Department of Defense was when he tried to introduce as evidence an alleged Groom Lake/Area 51 security manual. The government retroactively classified the document and the judge sealed Professor Turley’s offices at George Washington University.

Turley was simply using the document to illustrate the types of buildings at Groom Lake—such as a vehicle maintenance shop, which presumably dealt in everyday materials such as battery acid, antifreeze, and fuel oil that can be hazardous when burned. Yet the defense attorney for the government said that public exposure of the security manual could “endanger the national security.”

Anyone is free to go on the Internet and download their very own “secret” copy of the Area *51 Security Manual.* Glenn Campbell and Mark Farmer each received the manual from anonymous sources, and Campbell posted the text on his extensive website, Ufomind.

In the security manual, the section on “Field Sensor Guide” describes the “electronical sensors” planted throughout the ranges. These sensors look like little pots, and are marked “Government Property”—though they don’t say which part of the government! These sensors are able to monitor vehicles or individuals entering or exiting the BLM land next to Nellis, which is in itself an illegal use of public land.

The precision arrival at the border by the “Cammo Dudes” (as Campbell nicknamed the security guards) made it clear they knew we were coming—and it wasn’t just from the trail of dust we left in our wake driving down the long dirt road. The sensors had caused our

scanners to squelch regularly, every half mile.

Glenn Campbell's website, Ufomind, turned out to be a goldmine of information on Area 51. The maps in his *"Area 51" Viewer's Guide* got us to the border, and the frequencies he listed allowed us to eavesdrop on the encrypted squelches as the two Cammo Dudes lifted their radios and reported back to their main base.

Glenn Campbell has run the Area 51 Research Center since 1993, releasing information on the secret base and actively raising awareness on civil issues such as the Air Force land grab and the designation of the Extraterrestrial Highway running along the northeastern edge of the Nellis Complex. Campbell also produces *The Groom Lake Desert Rat*, a World Wide Web newsletter that "walks a careful line about what may be out there at Papoose and Groom Lakes, trying to avoid speculation, but arguing that the secrecy here is excessive given the end of the Cold War."

Before coming out to the border of Area 51, we went to Rachel, Nevada, to visit the Area 51 Research Center, a single-wide trailer with all kinds of junk piled in front that has fallen out of the sky—pieces of aircraft and radar targets. Rachel is literally a handful of trailers in a vast empty desert valley, with several establishments devoted to selling alien-related merchandise.

As reports of UFO sightings in the area continued to increase, so did Campbell's reputation as the man to contact if you wanted a "native" guide to Area 51. By the end of 1994, Campbell had been interviewed by virtually every major media outlet in the country, from CNN, NBC, and ABC News to *The New York Times Magazine*—everyone wanted to see the secret base that had no name.

### What's in a Name?

To this day no one knows where the term "Area 51" came from, but it could have originated in the Department of Energy, which currently operates the Nevada Test Site. Many of the sections of NTS are referred to by number—Area 15, Area 10, and Area 9 are near Area

51.

When I checked with the DoE database of declassified documents housed at the Coordination and Information Center (CIC), there were a number of documents recording radiation levels and structural examinations dating back to 1969 that referred to the Groom Lake area as “Area 51.”

Despite the government’s attempts at secrecy, the term “Area 51” has been in the popular vernacular for decades. George Knapp located official maps that show Area 51 in the region of Groom Lake. And the most damning evidence came from the defense contractor Lockheed, which flight-tested the U-2 spy plane and the F-117 stealth fighter. Lockheed black-and-white film footage shows aviation pioneer Kelly Johnson pointing to a blackboard that clearly states: “move out to Area 51.”

On the drive up to Area 51, there were other more obvious indicators of a secret base hidden somewhere in the Nellis Range. Running along the narrow two-lane U.S. 93 were large power lines—three wires with six insulators each, in excess of 200,000 volts. Going where? Not to the tiny roadside towns of Aztec and Rachel, the largest population centers in Lincoln County, which totals 3,800 people.

Just south of Alamo, the power lines cross U.S. 93, sending a surge of static over both scanners and opening all forty channels of the CB. Then the power lines veer from the highway and head due west, directly toward Groom Lake.

Between the power lines and the sophisticated equipment scattered through the desert—underground transformer stations and fenced generator substations with propane tanks, not to mention double dump trucks with U.S. Government license plates and signs on the cab saying SANDIA NATIONAL LABORATORIES, LOS ALAMOS—I wondered how the government thought they had been hiding Area 51.

The Nellis Range was established as the Las Vegas Bombing and Gunnery Range in 1940, but the Groom Lake area wasn’t utilized as an airstrip for at least another decade. It’s not likely that any

structures existed on Groom Lake before 1952, when Kermit H. Larson, chief of the Alamogordo section of the Atomic Energy Commission, wrote to Dan Sheehan asking if he and his colleagues could "stay in the Cabin" at Groom Mine again: "Four of our survey group have another assignment to do over in your territory, west of Groom Lake to the Water Tank and to the northwest of the Tank…."

The DoE database holds a series of memos and letters between the Sheehan family, who worked Groom Mine overlooking Groom Lake, and the AEC, which was shaking things up in the area beginning with its 1951 series of nuclear bomb tests. Friendly relations soon turned sour, and Sheehan was reduced to writing to the director of the Test Division in August 1955 to request compensation for the damage done to the family's road and for the time lost when they had to evacuate their claim.

The facility on Groom dry lake was known as "Watertown" during the years of the U-2 program, until at least 1960. An unclassified press release from July 29, 1957, was unearthed first by Paul McGinnis, describing how a pilot landed his "small private aircraft" on the "Watertown air strip within the restricted air space over the Nevada Test Site." The release pinpoints the location as "in the Groom Lake area at the northeast corner of the Nevada Test Site."

The first mention of Watertown comes from an unclassified memo in October 1955 from Colonel Calfred Starbird, USAEC (U.S. Atomic Energy Commission), Washington D.C. Starbird writes in response to a *Las Vegas Review Journal* request for a "progress report on Watertown Project." The approved release said,

> Construction at the Nevada Test Site installation a few miles north of Yucca Flat which was announced last spring is continuing. Data secured to date has indicated need for limited additional facilities and modifications of the existing installation. The additional work which will not be completed until sometime in 1956 is being done by the Reynolds Electrical and Engineering Company, incorporated under the direction of the Atomic Energy

Commission's Las Vegas Branch Office.

Tom Mahood, one of the Interceptors and webmaster of the Blue Fire website, believes REEC was working on the infrastructure, like the roads and power lines, while Lockheed Skunk Works was actually building the facilities on the sly to test their U-2. In Ben Rich's book *Skunk Works* (1994), the search for a testing facility is described—how Kelly Johnson and a representative of the CIA visited Groom Lake and decided that it was sufficiently remote and secure enough.

As a cover story for the CIA, the official government press release on Watertown in 1957 stated that NACA, the precursor agency to NASA, along with support from "the Air weather Service of the U.S. Air Force," was developing an aircraft that could "make weather observations" at unusually high altitudes. The U2 at Watertown was even painted in NACA markings.

It seems likely that there was no authorization for the covert facility between 1955 and the land withdrawal in 1958. Glenn Campbell found Public Land Order 1662, which went into effect in June 1958, withdrawing about sixty square miles of Groom Lake from public use and allocating it to the Atomic Energy Commission for use by the Test Site. As Campbell explains:

> I have yet to find any evidence that the land was part of the LVBGR [Las Vegas Bombing and Gunnery Range] prior to this—at least from the Federal Register. Such authority must have existed, I assume, I just can't find it. (In other words, I have found the withdrawal for most of the LVBGR, but it does not cover Groom Lake.)

To find out what the Watertown facility was like, I consulted another 1957 DoE document addressed to William Fairhall, manager of the Engineering Department at REEC The 1957 nuclear test series, Operation Plumbob, included twenty-four nuclear detonations, so a lot of structural safety checking was done. The NTS headquarters at Mercury, Nevada, requested "information on the following structures

at Watertown." Along with a battery shop, "Trailer 98," and the control tower, there was also a "Base Theater" and "Building 104 (Base headquarters)."

In the official press releases, Watertown remained under the jurisdiction of the Nevada Test Site. Most people believe that through some sort of subsequent agreement, the AEC then passed control of Groom Lake to the Air Force. My tour guide for the Nevada Test Site told me there were rumors that Area 51 had been traded to the Air Force for Tonopah, a large installation at the northwestern end of the Nellis Range. Yet according to the official DoE history of Tonopah, the site was surveyed by the Naval Air Special Weapons Facility at Kirkland Air Force Base and recommended in a report dated February 27, 1956.

The first appearances I found of the term "Area 51 camp" were in DoE documents from 1969 to 1970, assessing ground motion and radiation levels after nuclear blasts at NTS. Every time there was a nuclear detonation, the Watertown personnel had to evacuate for weeks, which undoubtedly interfered with the flight test and training schedules.

The secret air base has undergone several bursts of growth during the past four decades. One buildup occurred from 1960 to 1964, at approximately the same time that stealth technology began to take off with research into new radar absorbers such as carbon-fiber composites and high-strength plastics. Another major influx of funding came in the Reagan years, when the large runway was constructed.

We aren't sure exactly how much money has been spent on Area 51 because it has been funded under so-called black projects. Tens of billions of dollars have disappeared into black-project budgets—and only a few members of Congress have the clearance to know where and how the money is being spent.

One thing is certain, there's a lot of black project money being poured into Area 51 for the new research-and-development aircraft—whether they are disc-shaped or bat-winged stealths.

## “Cammo Dudes” in Action

Seeing the “Cammo Dudes” in action gave new meaning to the term “black project.” I’ve been on tours of secured areas—the Pentagon, Capitol Hill, the Nevada Test Site, even a nuclear submarine—but this was security like I’ve never seen before. Their silent efficiency was almost frightening. They even hide their radio communications—and encryption is a costly and difficult process rarely undertaken by the military.

The cameras on Freedom Ridge followed my movements as I climbed up the low hill on the other side of the road, up dirt tracks fit only for a four-wheel-drive.

In response, the Jeep Cherokee finally began to move, turning and driving up a well-maintained road to a lookout post on the opposite hill. They were perhaps sixty feet away. Down in the wash between us were smaller versions of the warning signs, disappearing into the rugged land between the buttes.

My view into Area 51 was blocked by the mountain ridges to the west. I trained my binoculars on the Cherokee as one of the Cammo Dudes got out and uncovered a permanent binocular mounted on a tripod. I watched him watching me.

He was wearing gray pants and shirt that blended well with the desert, and his black gun holster was tied down to his thigh, the way SWAT teams and Special Forces do, so they can run after “violators.”

Whatever they’re hiding in Area 51, they certainly protect it well. One of the many secrets about Area 51 is exactly *who* runs the security force at the border. Best guesses say it’s Wachenhut, the premier private security firm that works so closely with the CIA that it might as well be part of the Agency. But—no offense—these men were a notch above the typical Wachenhut employee.

The only time Glenn Campbell ever saw a Cammo Dude’s ID was in August 1993, when one presented a card identifying him as a sworn and “compensated” deputy of the Lincoln County Sheriff’s Department. A list of “Special Deputy Sheriffs” appears on the County

Recorder, all entered and revoked on the same day, August 24, 1994. In all, Sheriff Dahl Bradfield deputized twenty-two men, supposedly beginning in 1989 shortly after he took office. That's more "special" deputies than the entire paid staff of the Lincoln County Sheriff's Department.

These men were sworn in by notaries in neighboring Clark County, with the records endorsed "DET AFFTC," which stands for Detachment-Air Force Flight Test Center. All twenty-two deputies listed their address as Pittman Station, a lonely post office substation on Boulder Highway. In early 1996, Campbell learned from the main postal center in Las Vegas that both Pittman Station and its zip code, 89044, had been decommissioned about "six or seven years ago."

It took several calls to reach Sheriff Bradfield in Lincoln County, who told me it was merely due to logistics—the distance between the sheriff's office in Alamo and the border of Area 51: "The reason we deputized them [the security force at Area 51] at that point was that they could only hold a suspect for thirty minutes. Then they changed the state regulation to one hour, and they didn't need to be deputized anymore." I asked if these special deputies were paid by Lincoln County, and Sheriff Bradfield said no. He also couldn't tell me who they did work for.

Since nobody seemed to know for certain, I looked in the most obvious place—the radio frequencies the security guards were using. Every non-federal land-mobile radio service must be licensed by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), while government agencies receive their authorization from the Interdepartmental Radio Advisory Committee (IRAC).

Frequencies are licensed to prevent interference for existing users. Those who illegally use a licensed frequency, particularly if it is a federal frequency, can receive stiff fines and prison sentences of up to ten years.

During my trips to Area 51, I've heard encrypted bursts over four of the five frequencies Campbell lists in the *"Area 51" Viewer's Guide.* I found all four in *Police Call* from Radio Shack (1996). Wachenhut

frequencies wouldn't be listed in *Police Call* because private patrol and security companies must use the "Business Radio Services" from Radio Shack.

Four out of the five frequencies were registered to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): 408.400, 418.050, 142.200, and 13830. Frequency 170.500 was licensed by the Forest Service. On my first visit, I could see when the Cammo Dude in the Jeep raised his walkie-talkie and talked into it—at the same time, every time, the squelch of an encrypted transmission went over frequency 408.4.

So the Cammo Dudes are actively using FEMA frequencies. I couldn't help wondering: Where's the emergency?

I called the FEMA headquarters in Washington, D.C., and asked about frequencies in use at Area 51.1 was immediately connected with Morrie Goodman, director of communications for FEMA. My conversation with Goodman was definitely one of the more highly charged encounters I had while researching this book. But then again, Goodman was preoccupied by a lot of things—"We've got so many disasters going on, tornadoes in Texas," he noted. But he took the time to make it very clear: "This communications director who knows everything about this agency doesn't know a thing about Area 51. Nor do we have anything to do with Area 51." Early in our conversation, Goodman also said, "I'm not allowed to talk about black projects—do you want me to get arrested?"

**FEMA**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency goes in after a flood or a hurricane and helps organize communities and charity assistance, making sure disaster victims are taken care of and necessary repairs are made. I couldn't put the two together—the silent, armed-to-the-teeth Cammo Dudes and FEMA, a benevolent government agency that gave me cheap apartment insurance while I lived in Manhattan.

But FEMA has been notoriously bad at its job. When Hurricane Andrew smashed into Florida, FEMA was accused of "dropping the

ball" with disaster relief. The media and Congress finally looked into FEMA and discovered that the agency was spending twelve times more for "black operations" than for disaster programs.

According to a 1991 investigation by the General Accounting Office (GAO), the congressional watchdog unit, less than 10 percent of FEMA's staff (230 bureaucrats out of an estimated 2,600) were assigned full-time to preparing for major natural calamities such as storms or earthquakes. Most of FEMA's personnel were occupied with plans for protecting the government during a nuclear attack.

Mark Farmer, a pilot and a former photojournalist for the U.S. Coast Guard, has photographed the Groom Lake air base and the surrounding area both from the ground and the air. Farmer is also one of the Interceptors—one of a loose network of military monitors who use the airwaves to spot secret aircraft. When I asked Farmer why FEMA frequencies would be used by security, he said nonchalantly, "I wouldn't be surprised if FEMA had a bunker at Area 51. It would make sense since it's protected by secrecy anyway."

"Underground facilities" play a large part in the mythology of the UFO phenomenon. Many of the rumors about Area 51 concern underground rail systems or subterranean complexes where alien technology is taken apart and examined. Bob Lazar claims that the underground hangars of S-4 go "through the small ridge of the mountain next to Papoose Lake."

FEMA certainly is known for its underground facilities. Mount Weather near Bluemont, Virginia, is only one of ninety-six shelters in the Federal Relocation Arc, serving leaders and critical personnel in North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. There are all kinds of rumors about the elaborate underground city at Mount Weather, including a battery-powered subway connecting numerous buildings, and an artificial lake.

Perhaps FEMA was also busy out at Area 51, and that's why the Office of Inspector General (OIG) gave the agency's effectiveness a universal thumbs-down during presidentially declared disasters in fiscal years 1989, 1990, and 1991. The OIG report concluded that

FEMA didn't allocate funds to the states that needed them the most; instead, they used "various formulas, congressional direction, project proposals, and other techniques."

Though the FEMA budget has been drastically reduced (I lost my FEMA insurance in 1996 due to cutbacks), the Auditors' Report conducted by the OIG, on the fiscal year 1995 financial statements still wasn't satisfied with FEMA's performance. By February 1997, FEMA had complied with only five out of the thirteen recommendations to improve internal controls and ensure compliance with laws and regulations.

I was reminded of the government's actions in the waste lawsuit currently being fought over Area 51. On its official website, under "Responsibilities of FEMA," the agency states that it has precedence over other federal response activities, "except where national security implications are determined to be of a higher priority."

The words "national security" pop up with alarming frequency when officials talk about both Area 51 and UFOs. I can understand the government wanting to keep its new R&D craft secret, but why are tens of thousands of UFO documents classified for "national security" reasons?

## Executive Orders

When the waste lawsuit was in district court, the Air Force Secretary, Sheila Widnall, tried to circumvent the judicial system by asking President Clinton to exempt Groom Lake from "any federal, state, interstate, or local" environmental laws. Clinton obligingly signed Executive Order 95-15 in September 1995 issuing the exemption for one year. This exemption continues to be renewed every year.

You hear a lot about executive orders from New World Order conspiracy theorists and Patriot groups. Executive orders, they maintain, are an unconstitutional presidential power, yet they become law simply through publication in the *Federal Register*. Congress is bypassed, therefore "we the people" have no direct say in what

becomes law. Congress also has no power to prevent martial law from being declared, and according to Executive Order 11921, they can't review the process for six months.

FEMA has been invested with a great deal of power through executive orders. Just a few of the powers transferred to FEMA's Authority in 1979, to be put into effect "in times of increased international tensions and economic or financial crisis," include:

- the National Security Act of 1947, which allows for the strategic relocation of industries, services, government, and other essential economic activities, and to rationalize the requirements for manpower, resources, and production facilities;
- the Act of August 29, 1916, which authorizes the Secretary of the Army, in time of war, to take possession of any transportation system for transporting troops, material, or any other purpose related to the emergency; and
- the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, which enables the President to seize the property of a foreign country or national.

In case you think executive orders aren't ever enacted, think again. President Andrew Jackson used executive orders to force the Cherokee Nation off its ancestral lands. The Cherokee fought the illegal action in the U.S. Supreme Court and won, but Jackson defied the Court's ruling, forcing the Cherokee to move in a journey now known as the Trail of Tears.

More recently, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt used Executive Order 9066 in December 1941 to place Japanese citizens of the United States in concentration camps. Their property was confiscated and when World War II ended, these Japanese families had to start all over again from scratch.

Perhaps the power of executive orders can be summed up most

succinctly by arch-conservative activist Howard J. Ruff: “Since the enactment of Executive Order 11049, the only thing standing between us and dictatorship is the good character of the President, and the lack of a crisis severe enough that the public would stand still for it.”

So what is FEMA doing out at Area 51? Even when there is no martial law in effect, FEMA offers “guidance” to the Department of Defense and the National Security Council (NSC) on issues of national security emergency preparedness. FEMA could be authorized to provide security for Area 51 if the state government asks for help in “an uncommon situation which requires law enforcement assistance, which is or threatens to become of serious or epidemic (large-scale) proportions, and with respect to which State and local resources are inadequate to protect lives and property of citizens, or to enforce the criminal code.”

Yet Margie Gunn, Lincoln County representative of the Emergency Management Agency, told me that her county hadn’t requested emergency aid. Because it can be difficult to get the FCC to issue new frequencies rapidly, Gunn figures federal agencies just work those things out among themselves. Especially when, as Gunn said with a laugh, “Area 51 doesn’t exist, you know, except in everyone’s minds.”

**FEMA and UFOs**

A key government study completed in 1953 by the Robertson panel concluded that UFOs were much more a threat to the “orderly functioning of the protective organs of the body politic” than to national security. This was supported by the 1960 Brookings Institute Report for NASA, which concluded that the discovery of extraterrestrial life could have a “disastrous impact on society.”

These studies indicated that people would panic and civil unrest would ensue if aliens landed on Earth—a scenario right out of the H. G. Wells story “War of the Worlds” (1898). It was this belief in the potential for disasterlike conditions that led the authors of *Fire Officer’s Guide to Disaster Control* to include a new chapter on UFOs in

their most current, 1993 edition.

The weighty *Fire Officer's Guide* is used by fire and police departments across the United States. It is published by the Delaware State Fire School and made available through the Fire Engineering Book Service, which features it in its catalog as "An essential publication for those persons involved in emergency planning, management, response, and government operations."

The authors, William M. Kramer, Ph.D., and Charles W. Bahme, J. D., relied heavily on their own research and experiences when writing the UFO section, concluding:

> Hence, as we near the year 2000 and move beyond, any comprehensive disaster plan should address the potential for panic and other deleterious effects that might befall a populated area when unexplainable phenomena occur. We will see, as we continue our discussion in this chapter, that widespread blackouts, communication disruptions, and other potentially disastrous conditions have been linked directly to UFO sightings.

Kramer and Bahme claim that power failures associated with UFOs took place in Brazil in 1957-59, in Italy in 1958, and in Mexico in 1965. They also quote the Operations and Training Order issued by the Inspector General of the Air Force on December 24, 1959, emphasizing the seriousness of UFOs: "Unidentified Flying Objects—sometimes treated lightly by the press and referred to as 'Flying Saucers'—must be rapidly and accurately identified as serious Air Force business…"

But it was personal conviction that led these two authors to include the detailed section on UFOs in a manual for government employees, including reported shapes, history, secrecy, UFO hazards, and a recommendation for emergency action when confronted by a UFO.

Bahme's belief in the danger of UFOs harked back to the "Los Angeles Air Raid of 1942," which he personally witnessed:

> All the fire fighters saw in the sky were the 15 or 20 moving "things" which seemed to change course at great speed apparently unaffected by the flak from bursting shells all around them. Rumors that one had been shot down were never verified, nor was the explanation that these zig-zagging invaders were weather balloons ever taken seriously.

Kramer and Bahme admit that "some fire chiefs have little confidence in disaster plans, especially those dealing with UFOs or enemy attack." Yet they counsel that "a good plan, good leadership and adequate resources" will inevitably save lives in any disaster.

When it comes to emergency preparedness, both the U.S. Fire Administration and the Federal Insurance Administration are under FEMA's jurisdiction. Under FEMA's Integrated Emergency Management System (IEMS), local fire jurisdictions are integrated with other emergency activities for disaster response.

So while I had Morrie Goodman, director of FEMA communications, on the phone, I asked if FEMA has any contingency plans for aliens landing in the United States. Goodman said his interest in UFOs is purely for their "entertainment value," but he added that when he was being fully briefed four years ago on entering his position, he had asked whether FEMA dealt with UFOs. Goodman says they told him to "get real" and moved on the serious issues at hand.

I asked if FEMA had officially approved the 1993 version of *The Fire Officer's Guide to Disaster Control*, as was reported in the January 1995 issue of *Omni Magazine*. But Goodman insisted, speaking very slowly so I wouldn't miss a word, "FEMA does not now or never has as far as preparedness, response and recovery, or any other arena, dealt with the subject of UFOs."

**Secrecy at Area 51**

Nobody knows for certain whether UFOs are being kept at Area 51 for

research and development purposes. But there's no denying the deadly seriousness of government secrecy. It's exemplified by a little catchphrase used by employees from the Nevada Test Site—where, incidentally, Area 51 employees are told to say they work. This phrase was repeated by FEMA spokesman Bob Blair when *Time* magazine asked about the underground complex at Mount Weather: "HI be glad to tell you, but I'd have to kill you afterward."

I returned to Area 51 in June 1997 with my father, Bob Wright, and my partner, Kelly Beaton, the same month *Popular Mechanics* printed a cover story that Area 51 had moved. We already knew from the picture on the second page that Jim Wilson, the science editor, hadn't gotten within spitting distance of Area 51. He was shown standing in a vast desert valley in front of a cattle guard locked with padlocks, and therefore he concluded: Area 51 has moved.

*Popular Mechanics* has a real interest in UFOs; another recent cover story was entitled "Flying Saucers Are Real," based on Bob Lazar's testimony. The most recent Area 51 article noted that "Bob Lazar … claims the government moved the crashed flying saucer he worked on at the S4 site to a more secret location."

When we arrived at the border of Area 51, we did find some changes. The signs now announced: NO TRESPASSING, U.S. AIR FORCE INSTALLATION, as if you have simply stumbled across the boundary of the Nellis Range. Now in order to see signs that say USE OF DEADLY FORCE AUTHORIZED you have to hike some distance along the border. I had to applaud the good PR move that removed that stinging phrase from the main entrance.

We saw another carload of tourists arrive while we explored the area, but as we returned we scared them off. The Cammo Dudes didn't appear until we pulled back about a quarter of a mile and parked on the outermost buttes. I had just cracked open my door, camera in hand, when we heard the sound of rotors.

A Pave Hawk helicopter seemed to rise up from the ravine to the north, appearing out of nowhere. The side of the helicopter was open and a man in desert camouflage leaned out, looking through a piece

of equipment—possibly a camera—he aimed in our direction. The helicopter dipped to within forty feet of our car, rocking us with the downdraft and raising a cloud of dust. It forced me to break off taking pictures to close the door, then the helicopter flew over and we heard on frequency 126.650, “staying on the perimeter of the Range.”

If that wasn’t enough, a Jeep Cherokee blasted out of Area 51—this one with a red and blue light-bar on top and a government license plate on the front. It shot past us going sixty—a piece of cake on the beautifully graded Groom Lake road.

As we followed, listening to their encrypted transmissions to the sheriff’s department on 139.00,1 laughed at the *Popular Mechanics* article and tossed it in the back. Not only was Area 51 alive and kicking, but it was still quite effectively guarding its secrets. But I bet the Air Force brass were congratulating themselves on how many hundreds of thousands of people would believe what they read in that national magazine.

Like all of my research, the UFO phenomenon persistently tried to hide its secrets. But as my forays into Area 51 certainly proved, we may not know exactly what’s going on, but there’s far too much evidence that *something* is happening to continue to ignore it.

So let’s peel back the layers of secrecy and see what’s hidden within the UFO phenomenon, using the secret government base at Area 51 as the UFO Rosetta stone.

CHAPTER 2

# The History of UFO Sightings

> What we will do here is to present evidence that UFO's are a global phenomenon which may have persisted for many thousands of years.

THIS AUTHORITATIVE QUOTE WAS taken from Section 33.2 of the United States Air Forces Academy textbook *Introductory Space Science*, Volume II, Department of Physics. This textbook was used by the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs from 1968 until fall 1970, when the thirty-third chapter, "Unidentified Flying Objects' was reduced by half, from fourteen to seven pages.

The UFO chapter was pulled shortly after the media got hold of the textbook, notably the *National Enquirer*, which at that time claimed to have the largest circulation of any weekly paper in America. In an early October 1970 issue, the *Enquirer* headlined with " AIR FORCE ACADEMY TEXTBOOK WARNS CADETS THAT UFO'S MAY BE SPACECRAFT OPERATED BY ALIENS FROM OTHER WORLDS."

I found both versions of the space sciences textbook posted on the Computer UFO Network (CUFON), and the original was on ParaNet Information Services, where Don Ecker of UFO *Magazine* transcribed the text sometime in the late eighties. Since this textbook was written by the Air Force after it had just spent twenty years as the only official investigator of UFOs (during Project Blue Book, 1948–1969), then arguably this textbook presents the government's "expert" opinion.

Colonel James F. Sunderman, director of information for the USAF

Academy in Colorado, supplied copies of both versions of Chapter 33. In Sunderman's "letter of reply" dated November 4, 1970 (also posted on CUFON), the colonel offers the official explanation that the chapter was changed "to coincide with the findings of the Condon Report," published in January 1968.

**Ancient UFOs**

The space sciences textbook includes pictorial evidence supporting the theory of extraterrestrial visitations throughout human history:

> Only 8,000 years ago, rocks were sculpted in the Tassili plateau of Sahara, depicting what appeared to be human beings but with strange round heads (helmets? Or "sun" heads on human bodies?) .

Archeologists usually refer to the paintings at Tassili n-Ajjer in southern Algeria as prehistoric "masked figures." Though there is evidence that the people of the Sahara influenced the cultures of both the Nile Valley and West Africa, there is no stylistic similarity between the "masks" in Tassili art and those from West Africa.

Scholars are not certain of the meaning of these paintings because they still haven't deciphered the hieroglyphic language engraved on the rocks next to them. Dating these figures is difficult even with radiocarbon techniques, yet they are roughly divided into several periods ranging from the beginning of human occupation at Tassili, around 5500 B.C. when the Sahara was much wetter, continuing sporadically until the fifth century B.C.

The faceless (aniconic) figures are found in both the early and middle periods. The smaller figures engraved in shelters are believed to be contemporary with the oldest paintings in Tassili. Either before or shortly after these cave paintings were made, an enormous "masked" figure was painted on the side of a cliff. This large figure is nearly eighteen feet high, outlined in dark purple and shaded with broad planes of color. It has a helmet-type device that encircles the

head and rests directly on the shoulders.

This large figure was dubbed “the Great God Mars” by critic and art historian André Lhote in his 1950 *Treatise on Figure Painting.* The figure is unusual, resembling the large animal paintings in size, while the form is the same as many smaller faceless figures that have been found among the thirty thousand rock paintings and engravings.

Another ancient figurai representation resembling the modern-day conception of a “gray alien” can be found at Glenn Campbell’s Ufomind website. It is also in Seton Lloyd’s *The Archaeology of Mesopotamia, Revised Edition* (1984).

This figure was found in an Ubaid grave at Eridu, dated approximately 5,500–4,000 B.C. The style is consistent with other Ubaid sculptures in the slanted eyes and conical head, and according to a message posted by Terence Moran, the extension of the head was usually fitted with a bi-turnen headdress. Yet this figure is unusual in that most were females while this one is clearly male.

Since figurai representations can be interpreted according to personal bias, the best examples of ancient UFO sightings and alien contact are found in texts. Coincidentally, the Mesopotamian civilization also offers the first mention of “gods” who traveled from the stars in ships, impressing humans with their terrible weapons before returning to the sky. These stories are part of the earliest known written records in the world, the cuneiform texts and tablets of the Sumerians, dating back to the third millennium B.C.

Linguists have been unable to prove the relationship of the Sumerian language to any other known language. Apparently the stories evolved from a long tradition of oral compositions with mnemonic aids built into the internal rhythms. In form, they are similar to hymns or laudatory myths of great deeds.

The space sciences textbook cites another ancient group of “storyteller” legends from India which were eventually gathered in manuscript form in the Book *of Dzyan.* These stories describe a small group of beings who came to Earth “many thousands of years earlier

in a metal craft which orbited the Earth several times before landing." The Academy textbook quotes at length from the Book *of Dzyan:*

> Separation did not bring peace to these people and finally their anger reached a point where the ruler of the original city took with him a small number of his warriors and they rose into the air in a huge shining metal vessel. While they were many leagues from the city of their enemies, they launched a great shining lance that rode on a beam of light. It burst apart in the city of their enemies with a great ball of flame that shot up to the heavens, almost to the stars.

Another ancient sighting was analyzed by the government study in 1969 which became known as the Condon Report (for more information, see Chapter 3). The Condon Committee took a great deal of time investigating an Egyptian papyrus that contained an account of a sighting that took place at the court of Thutmose III (c. 1504–1450 B.C.).

This papyrus belonged to Egyptologist Professor Alberto Tulli, and according to the translation of the hieroglyphs by Prince de Rachewiltz:

> … it was found a circle of fire that was coming from the sky … it had no head, the breath of its mouth had a foul odor. Its body was one rod long and one rod wide. It had no voice…. Now after some days had passed, these things became more numerous in the sky than ever. They shone more in the sky than the brightness of the sun, and extended to the limits of the four supports of the heavens….

Efforts to track down the papyrus and confirm the authenticity of this translation have been unsuccessful. During the Condon Committee's investigation, they received a letter from Dr. Walter Ramberg, scientific attaché to the U.S. embassy in Rome, who queried the inspector to the Egyptian Vatican Museum, Gianfranco Nolli.

Ramberg reported back that Professor Tulli had died and his belongings had been "dispersed among heirs, who may have disposed of the papyrus as something of little value."

When the historical context of the reign of Thutmose III is examined, there is an intriguing correlation to modern UFO sightings, which have been documented to come in "waves" around large-scale wars. Thutmose III engaged in a great deal of war, extending the borders of his Egyptian kingdom with elaborate military campaigns that conquered all of Syria and reached deep into the Sudan.

The Condon Report made comparisons between this Egyptian sighting and passages found in the Book of Ezekiel from the Bible. The logic of the Condon Committee's arguments is difficult to follow, especially when the investigators attempt to make a vague case for plagiarism. The report waffles between concluding that the verses from Ezekiel derived from the ancient Egyptian manuscript, and conversely, that someone could have faked the papyrus based on the biblical passage.

While the authenticity of the papyrus can't be verified, nevertheless, there is a striking similarity to Ezekiel's description of his visions. By the river Chebar, recorded in Ezekiel 1:13, Ezekiel saw that "In the midst of the living creatures there was something that looked like burning coals of fire, like torches moving to and fro among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning."

The Book of Ezekiel is also referred to in the Air Force Academy textbook, which cites various biblical passages that could be interpreted as contact with UFOs and/or alien beings:

> And even more recently, in the Bible, Genesis (6:4) tells of angels from the sky mating with women of Earth, who bore them children. Genesis 19:3 tells of Lot meeting two angels in the desert and his later feeding them at his house. The Bible also tells a rather unusual story of Ezekiel who witnessed what has been interpreted by some to have been

> a spacecraft or aircraft landing near the Chebar River in Chaldea (593 B.C.).

St. Anthony, the Egyptian founder of Christian monasticism in the third and fourth centuries A.D., also claimed to have met a strange creature in the desert. According to Jacque Valleé's *Dimensions* (1988), when St. Anthony approaches the "manikin" with the "hooded snout, horned forehead, and extremities like goat's feet," it claims:

> "I am a mortal being and one of the inhabitants of the Desert whom the Gentiles deluded by various forms of error worship under the names of Fauns, Satyrs and Incubi. I am sent to represent my tribe. We pray you in our behalf to entreat the favour of your Lord and ours, who, we have learnt, came once to save the world, and whose sound has gone forth into all the earth."

These ancient passages illustrate the ways that people interpret what they see in terms of their own culture. Ancient observers did not have the concepts and terminology to describe complex mechanical objects or the strange appearance of extraterrestrials. To St. Anthony, a helmeted figure could have been seen as a "hooded snout" and "horned forehead," while the goat's feet could refer to the booted feet of an alien astronaut.

The psychologist Carl Jung pointed out that the UFO phenomenon is a mythology as complex as any other in our history. Jung explored the psychology of UFOs in 1959 when he wrote *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies.* If UFOs are indeed a myth, an interpretation of some intangible desire or human longing, then these myths should recur throughout human history. The Roman historian Sallust, who critically examined the origins of myths in the first century B.C., concluded, "These things never happened: they always are."

Ufologists often point to the numerous myths of gift-giving gods

and the sudden rise of civilizations around the world as proof of early beneficial contact with alien beings. These mythological "bringers of civilization" are similar in form to the Greek god Prometheus, the hero who stole fire from the gods and gave it to man. The Greeks also speculated on the idea of life beyond our own world—not just gods living in the sky, but other beings in other environments distant from ours. This philosophical speculation on other worlds appears in ancient Chinese texts, as well as in Greek works by Pythagoreans in the fifth century B.C., and by the atomists Democritus and Epicurus in the fourth century B.C.

This civilizing influence is a key attribute of Nommo, the primal being among the Dogon in Mali, Africa. Nommo is said to have come from the sky bringing fire and the first fruits to earth. Before returning to the heavens, Nommo also gave the Mali a unique astronomical knowledge. The Dogon people knew of an unknown companion star to Sirius (commonly known as the Dog Star) long before it was discovered by modern astronomers. Even today, the Dogon are an extremely metaphysical culture with much more of their social organization tied to the creation myth than most other African tribes.

On the other side of the world, also looking to the skies were the people of Nazca living on the southern coast of Peru from about 500 B.C. to 900 A.D. This pre-Incan civilization is known for its beautiful multicolored pottery, decorated with stylized figures of people, birds, and animals.

It is in the Palpa Valley that their best-known creations can be seen: the Nazca Lines. These lines and figurai outlines were dug into a level strip of land running nearly thirty-seven miles down the narrow valley. In 1952 the first scientific excavations took place and additional series of parallel lines appeared. Some crossed inexplicably while others seemed to be "rubbed out" to form giant wedge shapes.

In the wildly popular Chariots *of the Gods?* (1968), Erich von Daniken proposed that these lines were actually runways for ancient astronauts. Yet von Daniken's attribution of almost every ancient

monument and ruin to alien innovations has been soundly rejected by scholars.

Since these lines can't be properly viewed from the ground, many archaeologists agree that they were meant to be viewed from the air. How the artists got into the air is another matter. In *Ancient Inventions*, Peter James and Nick Thorpe present evidence gathered by the International Explorers Society of Miami that the Nazca Indians constructed tight-weave cotton balloons that carried them into the sky so they could direct the creation of the enormous birds and monkeys.

Huge figures like the ones at Tassili n-Ajjer and Nazca can be found in many locations around the world among indigenous populations. Even the North American Indians created large figures, such as the ones in the Mojave Desert between Earp and Blythe, California. Ancestors of the Colorado River Indian tribes created these large-scale stick-figures, which seem to be aimed at viewers in the sky. One appears to be wearing a helmet, very much like an ancient representation of an astronaut.

## Premodern UFOs

During the European Renaissance, science began the long and arduous process of displacing the scriptural authority of the Church. In the early sixteenth century, the Protestant Reformation created a schism in the Western world, weakening the power of the pope. Then came Copernicus' theory that the sun rather than the earth was the center of the solar system, and humanity's conception of the universe has never been the same.

When people could finally conceptualize planets as heavenly bodies that were similar to the earth, they naturally began to consider whether those other planets were also inhabited. The moon was the first logical site for people to look for new civilizations. Astronomer Johannes Kepler was one early proto-science fiction writer who wrote *Somnium (Dream*, 1634). John Wilkins also immortalized the

existence of extraterrestrial civilizations in *The Discovery of a World in the Moone* (1638).

Two generations later, life on other planets was championed by writers such as Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle in *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes (Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*, 1686), and astronomer Christiaan Huygens in *Cosmotheoros* (1698). These imagined other-worldly environments were usually populated by men and animals similar to those on earth, though Huygens did state that though the aliens have hands and feet and stand upright, "it follows not therefore that they have the same Shape with us."

One of the most renowned interpretations of alien civilizations is found in Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Swift used the differences between man and aliens to satirize the failings of contemporary society. Yet UFO researchers have compared Swift's floating city of Laputa to the mammoth alien "motherships" regularly seen in modern sightings. Swift describes this "flying island" as "exactly circular" and powered aloft by a "loadstone of prodigious size in shape resembling a weaver's shuttle."

Scientific theorizing led to speculations on how "airships" could fly. A beautiful engraving from 1709 is reprinted in *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones* (1913), available through the Sourcebook Project of Maryland, a motherlode of new and ancient information on the frontiers of science. The engraving of an airship is in a book on precious stones because it was once believed that coral agates possessed the "magnetic power" that could keep a vessel aloft. The classic flying saucer shape of the airship is augmented by clusters of coral agates on the bottom, magnetically repelling the craft into the air.

An even earlier pictorial representation of UFOs flying through the air comes from a Renaissance woodcut (1566) of a view of the city of Basel, Switzerland. The figures in the foreground look up and point to the sky, which is filled with round black and white globes. The Air Force Academy textbook admits that "many documented sightings occurred throughout the Middle Ages, including an especially

startling one of a UFO over London on 16 December 1742."

Now I wouldn't consider 1742 to be the "Middle Ages," but it is a specific date and place that the USAF identifies as a legitimate sighting. The UFO chapter also includes an incident that took place in the tenth century in Lyons, France, in which "three men and a woman supposedly descended from an airship or spaceship and were captured by a mob. These foreigners admitted to being wizards, and were killed."

The Archbishop of Lyons wrote a ninth-century Latin manuscript, *Liber contra insulam vulgi opinionem*, describing the stoning of the three men and a woman who had "fallen" from a ship in the sky. The Archbishop explained that this animosity occurred because the French peasants believed in a "certain region called Magonia from whence come ships in the clouds."

The next major conceptual shift came with the Industrial Age in the nineteenth century, when mechanical devices routinely performed miraculous deeds. Human technology lent credibility to the appearance of objects in the air that could hover and move quickly through the sky.

Along with the technological strides, Darwin's theory of evolution changed man's view of himself. The first writer to suggest the possibility that aliens could be completely different from us was Camille Flammarion in his nonfiction work *Real and Imaginary Worlds* (1864). In his fictional work *Lumen* (1887), Flammarion imagined life in the form of plants that could speak and think. Two years later, in *Urania* (1889), he proposed that reincarnation could allow an individual's "lifespirit" to move from one physical form to the next after death.

Usually alien civilization was shown as very distant from our world, with the human protagonist traveling to meet cooperative, and sometimes amorous, aliens. This popular theme has recurred throughout modern history: the French writer J. H. Rosny presented a love affair between a human and a six-eyed tripedal Martian in *Les navigateurs de Vinfini (The Navigators of Infinity*, 1925). Nearly forty

years later, Robert Heinlein would write *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961), featuring Valentine Michael Smith, a human raised by Martians to possess Utopian ideals and a marvelous acceptance of a variety of human sexual expression.

This beneficial concept of alien life took a dramatic turn in the Victorian era. Victorian society repressed individuality, and fear of the unusual or abnormal was united with an anxiety about the approaching century—the same sort of superstitious millennium fever our own culture is currently experiencing.

Much like today, nineteenth-century anxiety unleashed an interest in paranormal phenomena. Henry James and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle are just two famous examples of the scores of writers who created melodramatic tales capturing the darker regions of the imagination.

H.G. Wells's "The War of the Worlds" (1898) depicted Martians invading Britain with their flying machines and terrible weapons. "The War of the Worlds" became the archetypal story of the "alien invasion"—a resoundingly popular theme throughout twentieth-century science fiction.

Wells found his inspiration in the real-life stories of sightings known as the "airship wave" of the late nineteenth century. The first airship sighting is said to have taken place in southern California in 1896, with many other sightings across America and around the world soon following.

One sighting was documented in the February 2, 1897 issue of the *Omaha Bee.* This article was reprinted in the UFO *Roundup* (1997), and contains an account of a UFO sighting in Hastings, Nebraska, 160 miles southwest of Omaha: "Several Hastings people report that an air ship, or something of the kind, has been sailing around in the air west of this city."

This "air ship" was first noticed the previous fall when it was seen floating about five hundred feet above the ground. Then in January the "air ship" returned and was sighted in several different locations. It had "the appearance of an immense star, but after closer observation the powerful light shows by its color to be artificial."

The reporter faithfully describes the appearance and movements of the UFO:

> At 9:30 last Monday night [January 25, 1897] the large glaring light was seen to circle around for a few minutes and then descended for about 200 feet, circling as it traveled at a remarkable speed for about two miles and then slowing up it circled for fully 15 minutes, when it began to lower and disappear as mysteriously as it had made its appearance…. A close watch is being kept for its reappearance.

In a second article on February 5, 1897, the *Omaha Bee* reported that the UFO had been sighted again, this time by people returning from a prayer meeting in Inavale. This tiny farm town is just forty miles (sixty-four kilometers) south of Hastings, near the Kansas state line.

Ironically, The USAF Academy textbook recounts as true one of the first UFO hoaxes, in the form of a "sworn statement" made on April 21, 1897, by "a prosperous and prominent farmer" named Alexander Hamilton from Le Roy, Kansas. The statement includes the fact that "his cattle were attacked at about 10:30 P.M. the previous Monday" and describes how Hamilton, his son, and his tenant:

> … grabbed axes and ran some 700 feet from the house to the cow lot where a great cigar-shaped ship about 300 feet long floated some 30 feet above his cattle. It had a carriage underneath which was brightly lighted within and which had numerous windows. Inside were six strange looking beings jabbering in a foreign language.

Supposedly, when the beings became aware of Hamilton and the others, they shined a bright searchlight on the farmer. The power appeared to come from a turbine wheel (about thirty feet in diameter) located under the craft:

> The ship rose, taking with it a two-year old heifer which was roped about the neck by a cable of one-half inch thick, red material. The next day a neighbor, Link Thomas, found the animal's hide, legs and head in his field. He was mystified at how the remains got to where they were because of the lack of tracks in the soft soil. Alexander Hamilton's sworn statement was accompanied by an affidavit as to his veracity. The affidavit was signed by ten of the local leading citizens.

This hoax by Hamilton is still often claimed as the first record of UFO cattle mutilation. The core details are the same: a bright light that approaches a distant area and mangled cattle are found the next day. Yet the day before Hamilton claimed his heifer was taken, an estimated three thousand people in Cripple Creek, Kansas, saw an object shimmering in the sunlight nearly a mile away.

Thousands of airship sightings were reported during this time—some were undoubtedly dirigibles created by contemporary inventors, and some were hoaxes yet others remain unexplained. The airship wave ended in April 1897, according to Paris Flammonde in UFO Exist! In the June 1897 *Scientific American*, an article dismissed the thousands of observations that took place over the past year as "creations from the brains of imaginative persons."

The next major UFO wave witnessed by civilians around the world would take place exactly fifty years later, in 1947.

**Modern UFOs**

The modern era of UFO sightings is characterized by the active involvement of scientists who began investigating the phenomenon. As early as 1896, Konstantin Eduardovich Tsiolkovsky, a pioneering scientist in rocket and space research, published an essay on communication with inhabitants of other planets. That same year, Tsiolkovsky also published "Exploration of Cosmic Space by Means of Reaction Devices," his seminal work on aeronautics.

In 1928, Tsiolkovsky wrote a largely neglected treatise, “The Will of the Universe: Unknown Intelligent Forces,” which supported the extraterrestrial theory of UFOs:

> A mass of inexplicable phenomena have been recorded in history and literature. The majority of them can undoubtedly be classified with hallucinations and other delusions, but does this apply to all such phenomena? Now that the possibility of interplanetary travel has been proven, man should show greater consideration for such “incomprehensible” phenomena. I believe that some such phenomena are not illusions, but real proof of the presence of unknown intelligent forces in outer space.

For most of his long scientific career, Tsiolkovsky carefully considered the evidence for the existence of aliens and why these aliens had not made their presence more widely known on earth. As reported by biophysicist Mark Milchiker in *SPUTNIK*, the monthly digest of the Soviet press, Tsiolkovsky scribbled a note on a letter from a student, A. Yudin of Tomsk, two years before he died in 1935: “Attempts of higher beings to help us are possible, because they continue to be made to this day. We, people, do not try to convince animals of the irrationality of their life. The distance between us and perfect beings is hardly any less.”

At the turn of the century, American astronomer Percival Lowell offered seemingly scientific proof of the reality of alien civilizations. Lowell was not the only astronomer who agreed with Giovanni Schiaparelli’s descriptions of *“canali”* he had observed on Mars, yet many people misinterpreted the Italian word to mean “canals” rather than “channels.” According to Lowell, these canals were artifacts constructed by the intelligent inhabitants of Mars.

Lowell financed his own observatory in Arizona and began distributing drawings of the canals he observed on Mars, faithfully capturing many of the patterns made by the giant canyons and volcanoes only vaguely discernible on the surface through nineteenth-

century telescopes. Lowell proclaimed that the patterns were an enormously complex water-distribution system that allowed the Martians to continue watering their farms on an increasingly arid world.

Lowell's misinterpretation of the evidence is a common problem throughout the history of the UFO phenomenon. Because individual sightings can be argued or disproved, some people believe that the entire subject of UFOs is a waste of time. Yet evidence can't be so easily dismissed. Witness testimony is used in our courts of law to prove guilt or innocence, but the problem lies in questioning the witness in a manner that elicits the facts rather than an interpretation of those facts.

Modern research presents us with more than enough witness testimony of the UFO phenomenon to winnow the facts from the chaff. With a grant from the Maryland-based Fund for UFO Research (FUFOR), Jan Aldrich is presently coordinating "Project 1947," a two-and-a-half-year, worldwide volunteer effort to reexamine UFO press clippings from the year 1947. Over five thousand newspapers from all over the world are being screened for UFO reports, as are libraries, historical societies, universities, and archives.

Aldrich first became interested in UFOs in the seventh grade when he witnessed the unusual phenomenon of ball lightning. As a retired military meteorological officer and historian, Aldrich started Project 1947 as historical research into the beginning of the modern UFO era. The project will document how ideas about UFOs developed, and will establish a solid collection of official UFO documents, articles, and personal accounts to be published in the Project 1947 volumes.

According to Project 1947, several established UFO waves took place in the early twentieth century. From 1908 to 1910, there was another worldwide airship wave, and from 1912 to 1913 in Britain there was the "Phantom Airship Scare," As always, these documented sightings are described in terms that agree with contemporary technology—that of dirigibles and air balloons.

One document supplied by Project 1947 is a letter to ATIC (Air

Technical Intelligence Center) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio, dated April 11, 1952, from a former studio manager for De Frenes & Company Motion Picture Studios, Philadelphia, The witness, Mr, Harrison, approached the studio to find out the cost of producing an animated film about a strange object he had seen in the sky nearly thirty years earlier.

The alleged sighting took place on August 4, 1917, in Philadelphia, The studio manager wrote down what Mr, Harrison had told him as "an instance of the odd type of people one runs into in the motion picture business," Mr, Harrison's theories on what he had seen took a decidedly religious turn as he speculated it may have been a "mystic Morse Code" or "a manifestation of the Holy Grail." Mr, Harrison's sighting is described by the studio manager as follows:

> In mid-afternoon of August 4, 1917, this Mr, Harrison had been standing at the window of one of the upper floors of an office building in Philadelphia, There were a certain amount of clouds in the sky, but the sun was shining. High in the sky he saw a series of bright glittering objects. They were arranged in a pattern as drawn below.

Though Mr. Harrison never saw the phenomenon again, the sighting apparently had a strong impact on him. The studio manager was struck by the fact that Harrison had been trying to interpret what he had seen for the past thirty years. Yet this sort of life-altering impact is common among people who observe UFOs.

Diaries and autobiographies provide excellent documentation of early UFO sightings. Nicholas Roerich, a famous Russian painter and Buddhist researcher, traveled for four years through India, Tibet, Mongolia, and China in the late 1920s. There is a museum dedicated to Roerich's work in New York City, complete with Internet site.

A quote from Roerich's diary "Altai-Himalaya," dated August 5, 1926, describes:

> Something remarkable! We were in our camp in the

> Kukunor district not far from the Humboldt chain. In the morning about half past nine some of our caravaneers noticed a remarkably big black eagle flying above us. Seven of us began to watch this unusual bird. At the same moment another one of our carvaneers remarked, “There is something far above the bird.” And he shouted his astonishment. We all saw, in a direction from north to south, something big and shiny reflecting the sun, like a huge oval moving at great speed. Crossing our camp this thing changed in its direction from south to southwest. And we saw how it disappeared in the intense blue sky. We even had time to take field glasses and saw quite distinctly an oval form with a shiny surface, one side which was brilliant from the sun.

One 1920s incident of physical interaction with a UFO can be considered a prototype EME (electromagnetic effect) report in which a UFO sighting coincides with mechanical trouble. In *Fate Magazine*, October 1973, Aaron C. Stern of Pine, Colorado, describes a UFO encounter that took place in August 1928, witnessed by his father and himself. Just after leaving their home in Tulsa, Olkahoma, fifty miles west of the city, their Willys Knight car started to miss and backfire. Stern asserts:

> As I started to look under the hood, suddenly the whole area was illuminated by the brightest light I have ever seen. It flashed by about 150 feet overhead. It was primarily a white light but as it faded it seemed to burst into many colors like a fireworks spectacle. Then darkness closed in again. Dad and I stood like statues—speechless. Then we both blurted almost simultaneously. “What was that?”

Stern described how they both “stood there trying to understand what had occurred” for the next fifteen to thirty minutes. Apparently they had been stunned by the appearance of the UFO. When he had recovered somewhat, Stern didn’t bother trying to tinker with the

engine. He simply turned the key and it started immediately. They completed their journey with no further trouble from the car.

There are numerous accounts of EME contact with UFOs, yet few people take the time to have their equipment checked after the encounter for radiation or indications of the effect. The engineers of the Condon Committee reported that the only way a vehicle could be stopped was by a strong magnetic field which would leave residual magnetism.

The number of reported sightings declined during the 1930s—the pre-World War II years were difficult due to the worldwide economic depression and the tensions from the rising power of Nazi Germany. Escapism was clear in the popularity of pulp sci-fi magazines. Some continued to explore the Wellsian theme of alien invasion, throwing in the innovative twist that humans invade the aliens' home world, as in P. Schuyler Miller's "Forgotten Man of Space" (1933). Other pulp sci-fi writers presented their audience with convincingly horrific alien monsters in their stories, such as John W. Campbell Jr.'s "Who Goes There?" (1938) and A. E. van Vogt's "Black Destroyer" (1939).

The other prominent alien theme in the early twentieth century was space opera or planetary romances, memorably created in the Barsoom series of stories by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Burroughs wrote about exotic alien princesses who conveniently fell in love with the heroes who rescued their entire race from malevolent monsters. A more serious exploration of this theme can be found in Raymond Z. Gallun's "Old Faithful" (1934), in which humans overcome the biological differences between themselves and a Martian, eventually reaching an understanding of their intellectual equality.

Cooperation and communication with alien races underwent a marked shift in emphasis during World War II. In van Vogt's "Co-operate or Else!" (1942), a man and an exotic alien are stranded on a strange planet during an interstellar war, and they are forced to work together in order to survive. A similar yet more hesitant groping for an understanding is portrayed in Murray Leinster's story "The Ethical Equations" (1945), which concerns man's first contact with aliens and

the importance every action assumes when one is trying to establish friendly relations.

Things changed again with World War II, the first aerial combat war. During the war, thousands of UFOs were witnessed by airmen on both sides of the fighting. Like the early airship and ghost ship appearances, these sightings came in distinct waves, in 1942 and 1944–45.

According to Project 1947, the name "foo-fighter" was invented at the end of World War II. During the war, pilots filed reports in numerous unit histories, operations, and intelligence documents citing observations of gremlins, kraut fireballs, jets, rockets, and even vertigo. In most cases the term "foo-fighters" was not used, but the phrase was eventually adopted from the popular "Smokey Stover" comic strip: "Where there's foo there's fire."

Pilots weren't the only witnesses. The radar plotters at the Argus 16 Combat Intelligence Center at Tarawa recorded foo-fighters, according to an article by Jerome Clark and Lucius Farish in the *International UFO Reporter*, Spring 1975:

> On April 1944 a "bogey," the blip of an unknown object, was tracked moving at the then incredible speed of 700 miles per hour. When the radar operators had determined there was nothing wrong with their sets, they had no choice but to conclude that it was a supersonic Japanese plane. Of course, it wasn't, since after the war American intelligence experts found that the Japanese had no such fighter.

In the *Herald Tribune*, a story on foo-fighters on January 3, 1945, unsuccessfully attempted to find a geophysical explanation for the anomalous objects:

> Induction is suggested by the reports from Allied airmen, that the foo-fighters keep up with their planes at fixed distances, regardless of plane speed, changes in speed or changes in direction. Electrical induction of some sort

> would explain such marvelous synchronization. Nothing else that is well known would explain such perfect timing…. Induction, however, fails completely to describe what happens when a fire-ball zooms upward, leaving its plane. Apparently the balls fly paths thousands of feet away from the planes.

There are literally hundreds of reports of sightings made during the war or soon after, when the American government officially began investigating UFOs. No conclusive explanation was ever found that accounted for the elusive foo-fighters.

### The UFO Wave of 1947

Many ufologists date the beginning of the modern UFO era to June 24, 1947, when fire-control equipment salesman Kenneth Arnold sighted "a formation of very bright objects" while flying over the Cascade Mountains of Washington State. Captains Brown and Davidson from Hamilton Field investigated Arnold's case almost three weeks after the fact, and they found Arnold to be a man of character and integrity.

The interviewers who finally arrived to take Arnold's statement remarked on his bitterness that it had taken so long for someone from the military to talk to him. Arnold's report was nearly lost in the official shuffle of hundreds of sightings that occurred during the six-week-long UFO wave that summer; meanwhile Arnold's sighting was mentioned in the press just about every day until the first of July.

The June 25 issue of the *Chicago Daily Tribune* quoted Arnold in a page one story:

> "The first thing I noticed was a series of flashes in my eyes as if a mirror was reflecting sunlight at me…. I saw the flashes were coming from a series of objects that were traveling incredibly fast. They were silvery and shiny and seemed to be shaped like a pie plate…. What startled me

most at this point was … that I could not find any tails on them.

"I counted nine of them as they disappeared behind the peak of Mount Rainier. Their speed was apparently so great I decided to clock them. I took out my watch and checked off one minute and 42 seconds from the time they passed Mount Rainier until they reached the peak of Mount Adams…. All told the objects remained in view slightly less than two minutes from the time I first noticed them."

On July 12, 1947, Arnold sent drawings of the objects to Wright-Patterson Air Field along with his report. The drawings show an object that is rounded at the front with slightly flattened sides, coming to a point at the rear. Two years later in the "Project Saucer" press release, Arnold described them as "flat like a pie pan and so shiny they reflected the sun like a mirror."

Bill Bequette, a reporter with the East *Oregonian* newspaper, recalled that Arnold described the objects moving "like a saucer would if you skipped it across the water," and when he placed his story on the AP wire, he inadvertently yet indelibly nicknamed UFOs "flying saucers."

When the AP story appeared nationwide on June 26, additional UFO stories began to come out. During the next week, skeptical opinions of the existence of UFOs were presented by Howard Blakeslee, Associated Press science editor, and an official "not interested" statement was released by the Army Air Force spokesman in Washington, D.C. (this was prior to the formation of the Air Force as a separate department).

There were numerous sightings that took place on the July Fourth weekend. According to Jan Aldrich of Project 1947, there was a sighting by a Captain Smith, a United Airlines pilot. The Coast Guard photographed a UFO, and some National Guard and private fliers organized air patrols to search for discs.

After July 7, hoaxes began to appear in response to the offers of

“reward money” for a real flying saucer. There were also an increasing number of journalistic spoofs on the flying saucer craze. The report of the Roswell, New Mexico crash appeared nationwide in newspapers on July 9, often coupled with the official debunking story issued at General Ramey’s press conference that it was really a “weather balloon” (for more information, see Chapter 6).

As Aldrich concluded, based on Project 1947 research, “By the 11th of July, the widely reported stories were of the hoax discs in Hollywood and Twin Falls (sort of the Coup de Grace of press coverage). From 12–15 of July, press accounts rapidly fall off.”

Foreign reports of saucers continued to receive some press coverage, and sightings from around the world lasted well into the fall of 1947. The AP carried an article from Denmark on October 28, 1947:

> A flying bottle is the newest object to squeeze into Denmark’s firmament, already crowded with reported flying balls, flying discs, saucers, and fireballs. The newspaper *National Tidende* reported today that a bottle-shaped object with a tail of fire whizzed past a farmer’s wife, Mrs. Carl Hansen, her daughter and a maid of Neorreby, Fuñen, Denmark when they were out in their yard.

Throughout history, people have instinctively ridiculed the unexplainable or ignored the unknown, and as in the summer of 1947, this tends to facilitate the suppression of UFO reports. Yet it was the first time that government officials were forced to take action because of a UFO wave. In America, Project Sign was created under Army Air Force jurisdiction to investigate UFOs. Thus, Kenneth Arnold’s sighting and the UFO wave of 1947 can be said to have initiated the age of government investigations into flying saucers.

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